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THE
HISTORY
OF
JANE SHORE,

Concubine to King Edward IV.

GIVING

An account of her Birth, Parentage, her Marriage with Mr *Matthew Shore*, a Goldsmith, in *Lombard-street, London*. How she left her Husband's Bed to live with King Edward IV. And of the miserable End she made at her Death.



Newcastle: Printed in this present Year.

1740

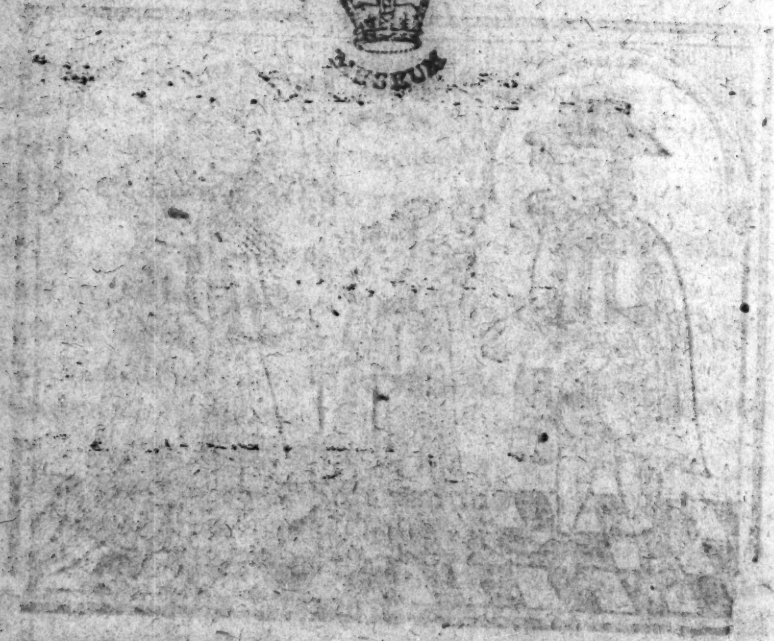
THE
HISTORICAL

MANUSCRIPTS

Collected by King Edward IV

1472-1483

These manuscripts were collected by King Edward IV
and are now in the possession of the British Museum
They are of great value and interest to the public
and are now open to the inspection of all persons
who may wish to consult them

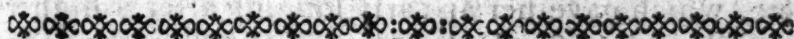


Printed by J. G. Smith, 1850

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THE
HISTORY
OF
JANE SHORE.



CHAP. I.

The Parentage and Birth of Jane Shore; how her early Beauty caused many to fall in Love with her; and how to prevent her being stole and debauched, her Father married her against her Mind to Matthew Shore,

ALTHOUGH there are but few who have
A not heard of the famous Jane Shore,
wife to Matthew Shore, goldsmith, of
Lombard-street, in London, and concu-
bine to King Edward IV. King of England; yet
because there are not many histories, though never
so voluminous, that have taken entire notice of
many passages of her life, I shall here set down
the particulars gathered from all, with such other
matters as have not yet been made public.

This lovely woman, (whose beauty tempted a mighty and warlike king to fall in love with her) was born in Cheapſide, her father's name being Thomas Wainſtead, a mercer of good eſteem; who brought her up tenderly, ſhe being his only daughter, cauſed her to learn to dance, ſing, and play on ſeveral ſorts of muſic, and being naturally witty, and very airy, ſhe improved in them to his own content and ſatisfaction; ſo that, as it were doating on her, he cloathed her richly, adorned her with jewels; and his trade lying among the court ladies, he often carried his daughter with him to ſhew her the paſſimes that were frequently made there to divert the Queen, &c. which gave her an early longing after a higher gentility than ſhe had yet attained to, or her city breeding was likely to produce.

When ſhe grew to the age of fifteen, her competent ſtock of beauty, and ſprightly carriage, cauſed many to fall in love with her; and ſome great lords fixed their eyes on her to get her for a miſtreſs, which her father perceiving, ſent her privately to be with his ſiſter at Northampton, where ſhe remained about a year, till he ſuppoſed their enquiry after her was over, and that ſhe might ſafely return without any hazard of being farther tempted to Lewdneſs.

Yet ſhe was no ſooner at home, but a plot was laid one night to have her carried away in a Chariot by the Lord Haſtings, who after the Death of King Edward, took her for his concubine, as will appear in the cloſe of the Hiſtory.

But

But the maid he had bribed with gold to get her abroad, repenting such treachery to her master, gave timely notice; by which means it was prevented; and her father plainly perceiving, unless he speedily took some prudent course, her great stock of beauty would be her ruin, resolved to marry her, that so having surrendered her virginity, and being in the arms of a husband, those that before sought to crop her virgin rose, would not regard her, but give over their pursuit.

And among those that courted, and earnestly sought her in the way of marriage, was one Matthew Shore, a wealthy goldsmith, in Lombard-street, whom her father pitched on for a fit husband, and acquainted his fair daughter with his intentions to marry her to him; but she appeared very averse to it, alledging sometimes the disproportion of years, he being about thirty; at other times his being much disfigured with the small-pox, and many other exceptions she made.

However, her father's positive commands, and the rich presents her love made her, won her consent, or seemingly she yielded to the match; and so married they were in great pomp, many of the court, as well as those of the city being invited to the wedding, which was kept with great feasting many days.



C H A P. II.

How ſhe was admired after her Marriage for her Beauty; and how the Lord Haſtings made Suit to her to be his Miſtreſs, and the Repulſe ſhe gave him: How he praiſed her ſo much to King Edward, that the King went diſguiſed to ſee her, and fell in Love with her.

THE new bridegroom having enjoyed his charming bride, grew extremely fond of her even to doating; which, as it uſually happens with married women, ſickened and pauled her love towards him; which he perceiving, and to wind himſelf, as he thought, the more in her affections, he cloathed her very richly, and adorned her with jewels, denying her nothing that ſhe deſired, or he concluded could tend to her delight and ſatisfaction: ſo that ſhe always appeared abroad and in the ſhop like a terreſtrial angel, which glorious ſight allured many to come and lay out their money, who otherwiſe would not have done it.

Nor was it long ere Lord Haſtings heard, the unwelcome news to him, that his fair Jane was married; which, however, made him not give over his purpoſe of enjoying her delicate body; ſo that often he reſorted to ſee her, treated her at home, and her husband abroad, often inviting them both to court; and took his opportunity to pour out his amorous diſcourſes to his wife, labouring by many fair words and devices to ſeduce her

her to transgress her nuptial vows in defiling the marriage-bed; but being very witty, and of a jovial and merry temper, she so baffled him with her quick and sharp replies, that he could not tell which way to take her; for when he often supposed she was the nearest yielding to comply with his desires, he found her the further from it.

When one time intending to try his utmost effort, throwing her on a bed in the room, when they were privately together in her house, she got from him, and run to her husband, telling him plainly how rude the Lord Hastings had been; which angered the goodman, who modestly rebuked him, forbidding him his House, and his wife's conversation; which made him fly away in a great heat, resolving, in revenge, to raise such a rival to Shore, that neither his authority nor his wife's chastity should be able to withstand.

This Lord being Chamberlain to King Edward IV. and a great favourite, having frequently his ear, and finding he was much inclined to fair women, though he was married to the Lady Elizabeth Grey, took an opportunity to sound in his ears the fame of Jane Shore's beauty, extolling her witty and merry humours even above that of her excellent features, which made the King (his wars being now entirely ended with the house of Lancaster. and he securely settled on his throne) much hearkened to this new adventure, in pursuit of which he expected much pleasure and delight, and therefore re-
solved

solved to go to Shore's shop in disguise, that his eyes might be a witness of the truth of what Hastings had related to him.

The King, whose thoughts still run on his new intended mistress, delayed not long to pay her a visit; and in order to do it, attired himself like a merchant, and withdrew privately from the court, only attended with a page; and coming into Shore's shop, then the richest in Lombard-street, he found the good-man busy in his affairs, and so for a little while attended till he was at leisure; he desired to see some plate, which was presently shewed unto him, and under pretence of carrying it with him beyond the seas, soon agreed for a considerable quantity.

But no wife yet appeared, it being somewhat too early for rising; which made him delay the time, with discourse of several matters transacted in England, and beyond the seas, where he said he had travelled; for being a prince of great learning, he could discourse of most countries, and the trade or commerce held with them, which much delighted Shore, so that he ordered his man to fetch up some of his best wine, and they drank merrily; the goodman beginning a health to the King, which the King, unknown to him, pledged; and when some other healths had passed, the King asked him, if there was not a mistress to so fair a house, otherwise he could help him to a wife, rich, young, and beautiful; which was only a fetch, that he might the more covertly require to see what his heart so much longed, before he departed.

For

For this offer Shore heartily thanked him, but plainly told him, he was already married to such a one as he described, fair, rich, and young, whom he so entirely loved, that she was the joy and delight of his heart, in whom he took such comfort, that had he had no portion with her, she was a sufficient one to him herself, beyond all the riches in the world.

This discourse made the King yet more desirous to see her ere he parted; and failed to praise good wives, insinuating what rare and excellent blessings such were to husbands.

At last he asked if he might not have a sight of his lady, whom he desired to present with some fine things brought from a far country, and seldom seen in England.

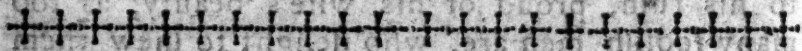
Shore, who little dreamed what was intended to his ruin, proud of his wife's beauty, as too many foolish men are, who delight to shew them to strangers, though to their certain cuckoldom, soon yielded to his request, and caused her to be called down; who came attired in a sky-coloured morning-gown, flowered with gold, embroidered with pearls and spangles; her head attire being curious lace, under which her bright hair flowed, wantoning with the sporting air, and her blushes upon her approach made her yet more lovely to behold.

The King no sooner saw the object of his heart's desire, but he stepped forth and saluted her soft coral lips, impressing upon them many balmy kisses; and by her husband's desire she sat
down,

down, and the King drank to her; she pledged him, and passed it to her husband.

Much pleasant discourse passed, by which the King perceived her not only of a merry free temper, but also exceeding witty, which delighted him as much as her beauty, and made him resolved at any rate he would enjoy her; and so presenting her with some curious things, which she modestly refused, as presents too great for a stranger: till her husband desired her not to slight the gentleman's civility.

The King pulled out his gold, and paid for his plate, which Shore would have sent home, but he refusing it, ordered his page to carry it; and with many sweet kisses, and some amorous whispers, he took leave at that time of the charming fair.



CHAP. III.

How she warned her husband of the danger: How Mrs Blague solicited the King's love to her, carrying her to Court, where the King danced with her, and put a letter in her hand.

THE King was no sooner departed, but the beauteous Jane demanded of her husband who this gentleman was, that had been so liberal to her.

He told her, he said he was a merchant, but he knew him not.

Ah

Ah, said she, his airy countenance, and graceful carriage, shews him to be something more: I rather take him for some great Lord in disguise, that will prove troublesome to me upon the account of requiring my Love, as some before have done; therefore, sweet husband, as you tender my chastity, and your own quiet, if he comes again, as I believe he will, and ask for me, tell him I am sick, I am gone into the country, or any thing you can feign to disappoint him.

The good man was highly pleased with this; and more discourse had passed, but people coming in about business, she retired.

The King at this time arrived at court, where he had been missed, and much enquired for, soon changed his apparel, and came in amongst his nobles with a chearful countenance; and though others were ignorant, Hastings well perceived where he had been, and the satisfaction he had received.

No sooner were they in private, but the King said, well, Hastings, I perceive thou hast good judgment in fine women; I have seen Shore's wife, and she exceeds the lavish praises you have given her, I like her so well, that come what will, I must enjoy her, though I have made but little progress to my love. But how, prithee, must I bring it about? to court her in her husband's presence, as a private person, I shall be served as you were; and there to do it as a King, will look too low for me; force her from his arms I will

will not, for it will cause a murmuring among my subjects, who would fear the like by their wives or daughters; but I must have her, and with her own consent, for love constrained carries no pleasure nor charms in it; therefore how this last may be attained do you advise.

The Lord Hastings no sooner heard what the King determined, last, but smiling, said, take no care, for this shall be easy to your Highness; there is one Mrs Blague, your Lace-woman, has a house near to Shore's, and is very intimate with his fair wife, and thither she often resorts to pass the evenings away: this woman is of an infinite intrigue, but of so covetous a temper, that a purse of gold would win her to do any thing; nay, even to debauch her own daughter: Her, I will engage, if your Highness so please, in this matter; and trust me, she will soon bring it to pass to your satisfaction, for there is no spring so sure a taker of love affairs, as to set one woman to wheedle and betray another.

The King liked this device; then it was agreed that he should see her at Mrs Blague's house, and have freedom to court her; but she should not know he was the King, till he was pleased it should be discovered.

The Lord Hastings was not slow in promoting his master's happiness, who had so highly favoured him, but soon with gifts and large promises, made the covetous lace-woman pliable, to do in this affair, whatever was desired; so that
many

many meetings and splendid treats were made at her house, the King coming as her friend in disguise; but although she left the lovely Jane sometimes on purpose, alone with him, and retired, and he courted her with all his rhetoric, yet she appeared averse to yield to his love, often blaming him sharply, for proposing such an immodest thing to her, as to defile her marriage bed.

When his Majesty took his leave, she very much chid Mrs Blague for suffering such a rude man to come to her house, telling her the design he had on her chastity; who seemed to wonder at it, as although ignorant, protesting she had not thought it in him, but intreated her to be at ease, and make no words of it, for she would suffer him to come there no more.

This pacified her, but the plot being further laid for her ruin, in Christmas time she got leave of Mr Shore that his wife should accompany her to Court, to see the Ball and Mask there, which he consented to with some unwillingness; and being introduced, after many had danced to the melodious music, one man of a comely port entered, shining in gold and jewels, with a mask on; upon which Mrs Shore heard the Ladies whisper, "That's the King;" who looking round through his mask, fixed his eyes on her, immediately stepped to her seat, and took her out to dance with.

At which she blushed, and trembled, but being in a strange place, not to be unmannerly, she
com-

plied, performing her part to admiration, which ended, taking her to a side-light, pulling off his mask to salute her, she, to her great amazement, perceived it was the same man who had entertained her at her shop, and at Mrs Blague's house; when putting a letter into her hand, he retired.

And she, in much confusion, coming to Mrs Blague, intreated her she would go home, who having compassed what she came for, willingly consented; as she returned, she plainly told her that man was the King, and deeply in love with her. When reading the letter, they found no more in it than this.

My lovely JANE,

YOUR beauty has enthralled my heart; it is a King that sues you would be kind to him; and by a line or two from your fair hand, tell him so to his comfort, who must enjoy you at any rate, and will prefer your beauty and witty humour above all the shining ladies of the court. And whatever you leave for my sake, you shall have no cause to repent it.

When she had read this letter, she was much disturbed, and abruptly leaving Mrs Blague, whom she now shrewdly guessed had a hand in the matter, went home.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

How, by the persuasion of Mrs Blague, she yielded to the King's desires, going from her husband, under pretence of going to see her mother, &c.

ALL the night following the fair Jane grew restless and uneasy; her husband enquired the cause, but could not learn it, though he found in the morning some tears had bedewed her fair cheeks.

As soon as she was up, she went to Mrs Blague to consult what she must do in this great strait, as well knowing the King's humour, that he never spared woman in his lust, nor man in his anger; therefore, if she complied not, he would compel her to his bed, and then perhaps for her fullness in not freely yielding, he having satisfied his appetite, might punish her, and make a public shame, to the ruin of herself and relations.

Mrs Blague seeing her thus pensive and doubtful, with a betraying smile, said, come, come, my dear Jane, you must be no longer coy, nor deny the King's request; a royal mistress stands so high, that no finger dare point at her or tongue revile her; you will glitter so near a throne, and enjoy so gallant a bed-fellow, that I'll warrant,
my

my child, you will never have cause to repent of leaving a dull husband for so advantageous a chance. I find he is resolved to have you for a mistress, and therefore it is best for you willingly to submit to be so highly exalted, which will be very pleasing to him.

At this discourse, though she trembled, yet considered from the many attempts her beauty had caused, it was not made to be enjoyed by one.

Having an ambitious mind, in a fatal hour the counsel of Mrs Blague prevailed; and instead of writing an answer to the King's letter, it was agreed that very night she should take her best apparel and jewels, and put herself into the King's arms, without any more formality, or ceremonious denials.

This being concluded upon, Mrs Blague immediately sent the King notice of her success, who was not slow at the appointed time to send his chariot for them: and in the mean while her clothes were conveyed to Mrs Blague's.

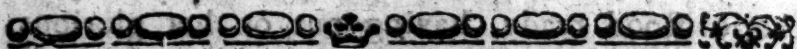
However, she supped with her husband, kindly kissed him, and dropt some tears, when, on a sudden, came one on a feigned errand, and said, that her mother was taken ill, and most needs speak with her. He would have gone with her, but she put it off, and gave him the last kiss he ever received from her fair lips, with tears in her eyes, she left him. Coming where the chariot

chariot stood ready, having put on her glorious apparel, she and Mrs Blague got into it, and



were conveyed to the King's secret apartment, where they found him in his closet; he raised his mistress, who, upon her approach, kneeled, kindly kissed her, and welcomed her with many varieties: It being late, and Mrs Blague, having delivered up this treasure of beauty into this Monarch's arms, left them in bed, to enjoy those raptures of delight and pleasure, as accompany the first meeting of lovers, when so close together; and I likewise, not being able with words to describe their infinite felicity, here draw the curtain, and leave them to their amorous revels.





C H A P. V.

Of the great Search her Husband and Parents made after her : How they came to know she was with the King ; and how for Grief and Shame Shore sold all, and travelled into many strange Lands, and returning, was hanged for clipping of Gold.

MATTHEW SHORE, the Husband, sitting up late, and his Wife not returning, grew much troubled in his Mind : he went to his Mother-in-law's, but they had not seen her that Day, nor was her Mother ill, as had been pretended, so that her Absence greatly troubled the whole Family ; and the whole Night was spent in seeking for her amongst her Relations and Acquaintance ; but she not being found, Mrs Blague among others protested she had not seen her since the Night before, dropping some dissembling tears for her being missing.

All the next Day was as fruitlessly spent, so that her kind Husband was in a Manner distracted ; at last they concluded (considering what had passed before) she was wheedled away by some amorous Courtier ; and if so, they resolved to make all the Interest they could to the King, not only to recover her again, but to have the Party disgraced and punished.

But alas ! the third Day they had News from a Court Lady, that she was seen with the King : this added more to their Grief, and they knew
not

not what course to take: they well knew if they went about to cross the King in his loving humour, it would prove their ruin; they had heard how he had caused one Burdet, Esq; who had highly entertained him at his house, to be hanged and quartered, for wishing the horns of a white buck, he loved, in the belly of him who wished the King to kill him; and another rich man, in Cheapside, for jestingly saying to his son, Be a good boy, and learn your book, and I will make you heir to the crown; meaning no other than his house with that sign.

They made indeed secret enquiry whether it was her voluntary act or force; and finding it the first, and she utterly unwilling to leave her new lover, they gave over their hopes of reclaiming her.

So that Shore, her husband, utterly renouncing her, and growing melancholy, sold off all he had; and to cure his troubled mind, travelled into Flanders, France, Spain, Turkey, and many other strange countries, where a magician shewed him his wife's face in a glass, in all her pomp and greatness, with all the miseries that afterwards befel her.

Returning in a poor state, when he supposed every one had forgot him, he practised, to maintain his wants, filing and clipping the golden coin, for which, in the latter end of the reign of Henry VII. he suffered death.

C H A P. VI.

How Jane Shore lived at court in great pomp till the death of King Edward; how the Lord Hastings then took her for his concubine; and how he was put to death by crooked back'd Richard.

THE famous Jane Shore having forsaken her husband's bed, and wholly surrendered her chastity to the King, pleased with the glittering humours of the court, and endeared by a Monarch's love, was admired by the vulgar, towards whom she behaved herself in the most courteous manner, preferring many to places of wealth and credit: Such was her power with the King, that when his courtiers durst not at any time intercede for the miserable and wretched that lay under his displeasure, or sentence of death; she, with her prompt wit and merry humour, would soon abate his anger, that she saved the lives of many, both poor and rich. And though she could in a manner do all with him, yet it is never known she ever used her interest to the hurt of any.

Both in London and in the progresses she made in the country, she would cause poor people to be sought for, and relieve their necessities; inducing and persuading others, who expected any good offices from the King, by her means, to do the like; never selling her favours, but thinking it payment sufficient to be thanked and applauded for her free and generous temper; with which, and her quick wit,

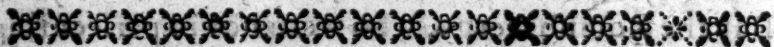
wit, she so baffled the court ladies, who envied her aspiring, that they found themselves unable to repartee.

And though the King had another mistress before her, namely, the Lady Bessy, yet he preferred Shore's wife much before her, and often would merrily say, I have two mistresses of strange different tempers, one of the religiousest, and the other the merriest in England; and indeed she held in high favour, to admiration, all the reign of this great and warlike King, having crouds of petitioners and suitors waiting at her chamber-door, or at her chariot-side, when she was to ride abroad; whose suits, to the utmost of her power, she preferred. As for Mrs Blague, who, as it fell out, least deserved of her, she procured of the King a stately house and manor, worth 200l. a year. But the Romish clergy, who were hot in persecuting many, who professed the gospel truths, much spited her, because she sheltered many from their rage and fury, after they had burned John Hull, on Tower Hill, for a heretic.

But as no worldly pomp or greatness is of long durance, so now her glory must have an end, and her days of inexpressible misery begin. For the King dying at Westminster, in the 40th year of his age, and the 23d year of his reign, Anno 1683; no sooner was he buried in a chapel, of his own founding, at Windsor, but crook'd back'd Richard (his brother, who had murdered King Richard VI. and Prince Edward his son) aspiring to the crown, though King Edward had left two sons, viz. Edward and Richard, very young, both behind him, and many daughters, all lawfully begotten of his

Queen

Queen; because the Lord Hastings (who, after the death of the King, had taken Jane Shore for his concubine, as now free) would not assist him in his wicked project of making away his two nephews, he afterwards getting the crown, caused him to be murdered in the Tower, he quarelling with him, alledging, that the Queen and Shore's wife had bewitched him, shewing his withered arm, which all knew had been so from his cradle; and that Lord thinking to excuse her, and saying, If they have done so, they ought to be punished; he furiously replied, Thou traitor, dost thou serve me with ifs and ands? I tell thee they have done so, and that I will make good on thy body; and soon after caused his head to be cut off on a log in the Tower.



C H A P. VII.

How Mrs Blague cheated Jane Shore of her jewels; how she did penance in the open streets; and all the people commanded not to relieve her, which a baker doing, was hanged for it; how she lived miserably, and died in a ditch.

JANE SHORE had no sooner notice of the death of Lord Hastings, her paramour, but she perceived a storm was falling on her head; wherefore, as she thought, to provide in time, carried all her jewels and rich things to her old confident, Mrs Blague, intreating her to conceal them for her; but she, like a faithless woman, not only denied them

them and every other succour, but, in her greatest need, when she came to crave alms, she thrust her out of doors, threatening to have her whipt for her impudence.

RICHARD, by the means aforelaid, having gotten the crown, to make himself seem fair by other sins, though he was a monster in nature, publicly declaring his mother to be a whore, his brother and his children to be bastards, caused his Queen to be poisoned, and would have wedded his niece; ordered Jane Shore to be apprehended, stript out of all she had, and to do penance, by several times standing in a white sheet, and then to walk bare-footed and bare-headed in her shift before the procession, with a cross and wax-taper in her hand, through Cheapside, which she did, looking so lovely in her blushes, that many pitied her; and also stript all her friends and relations out of what ever they had, pretending they had got it by her means from the crown in King Edward's reign; the which, and the disgrace of their only daughter, soon caused the death of her aged father and mother.

Yet not content with this, he put out a severe proclamation, that on pain of death, and confiscation of goods, if any person should harbour her in their houses, or relieve her with food or raiment: So that she went wandering up and down to find her food on the bushes and on the dunghills, where, some friends she had raised, would throw bones with more meat than usual, with crusts of brown bread, in the places where she haunted the dunghills; and a baker who had been condemned to die for a riot, made in the city,

in

in Edward's time, and saved by her means, as he saw her pass along, in gratitude for her kindness, would tumble a penny loaf after her, which she thankfully took up, and blessed him with tears in her eyes; but some malicious neighbour informing against him, he was hanged for disobeying King Richard's proclamation, which so terrified others, that they durst not relieve her with any thing: So that in pitious rags, almost naked, she went about, a miserable and deplorable spectacle, wringing her hands, and bemoaning her sad condition.

Thus she continued till King Richard was slain at the battle of Bosworth-fields, in the fight against Henry Earl of Richmond, who succeeded him by the name of Henry VII. in which reign she hoped for better days, but cruel fortune raised her up another enemy, for he marrying Elizabeth, eldest daughter to Edward IV. King Edward's Queen, who mortally hated her, bearing a great sway, procured another proclamation, that she should not be relieved; and so she wandered up and down, in as poor and miserable a condition as before, till grown old and utterly friendless, she finished her life in a ditch, which is from thence called Shore's Ditch, adjoining to Bishops-gate-street.

10 JULY 52

Thus you may see the rise and fall of this once stately and then miserable woman, and in her, all the vanity of the state and pomp of this world, who fell from Queen-like delicacies, to the misery of starving for want of a morsel of bread.

F I N I S.